UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1994/NGO/21
8 February 1994

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fiftieth session
Item 10 of the provisional agenda

QUESTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS SUBJECTED TO ANY FORM OF DETENTION OR IMPRISONMENT

Written statement submitted by Reporters Sans Frontières, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[27 January 1994]

1. Freedom of the press continues to be flouted regularly in a number of countries in the world. Some States utterly ignore this nonetheless vital aspect of respect for human rights. It hardly needs to be pointed out that there can be no freedom without freedom of the press.

2. Reporters Sans Frontières, an independent organization which upholds freedom of the press throughout the world, regularly acts to alert international public opinion to the numerous attacks on the right to information and on the work of journalists. Reporters Sans Frontières is constantly campaigning to put pressure on the States that are responsible for these violations, particularly with a view to securing the release of journalists imprisoned simply for doing their job. On 15 January 1994, at least 114 journalists were in prison or under house arrest all over the world (see the annexed list of names 1/).

3. In **China**, at least 21 journalists are in jail - one has been there for nearly 13 years - most of them because of their involvement in the democratic movement known as the Beijing Spring of 1989. They include Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming, of the Economic Weekly. According to several accounts, the illness that Wang Juntao contracted in prison has worsened. Although some journalists were released in 1993, others have been arrested and sentenced, many of them to long prison terms.

4. In **Turkey**, where Kurdish journalists are still treated like terrorists, at least 18 have been imprisoned, often simply for mentioning Kurdistan in public. Several are reported to have been tortured.

5. In **Myanmar** at least six journalists have been detained for offending the Yangon military junta between 1988 and 1990. Two of them, Win Tin and Nay Min, are seriously ill; they have been allowed no treatment. Two other journalists have already died in the terrible Insein prison for lack of medical care.

6. In **Cuba**, where no voice other than that of the ruling Communist Party may be heard, four journalists are paying with their freedom for being dissidents. One of them, Indamiro Restano Díaz, started a 10-year sentence on 20 December 1991.

7. In **Iraq**, nine journalists are in prison, and seven of them have been there for nearly 15 years. One, Aziz Al-Syed Jasim, arrested in April 1991 for refusing to write a book about Saddam Hussein, is reported to be suffering from diabetes and heart disease.

8. In the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, at least three journalists are being held behind bars. Manouchehr Karimzadeh, of the newspaper Farad, was sentenced in October 1993 to 10 years in prison for drawing a cartoon footballer who, so the Tehran authorities claim, looked like the late Ayatollah Khomeini.

9. In **Sudan**, where three reporters are in jail, the authorities can arrest and detain any opponent for several months, at any time and without any form of trial. There are many detention centres - known as "ghost houses" - in Khartoum and the rest of the country.

10. Elsewhere in the world, other journalists are being held in prison for their opinions: in **Algeria** (1), **Angola** (3), **Benin** (1), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (2), **Ethiopia** (2), **Haiti** (1), **India** (2), **Indonesia** (1), **Kuwait** (1), **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya** (1), **Peru** (4), **Republic of Korea** (1), **Rwanda** (1), **Syrian Arab Republic** (8), **Tajikistan** (6), **Tunisia** (4), **Turkmenistan** (1), **Ukraine** (1) and **Viet Nam** (9).

11. Every year more than 50 journalists are killed because of their opinions or in the course of their work (see the annexed list of names 1/). In 1993 at least 59 reporters were the victims of army units, guerrillas, death squads or organized crime. In **Algeria**, where gangs of fundamentalists have been sowing terror among professionals in the media, eight journalists were killed, having either been shot down or had their throats cut. In **the Russian Federation**, two days of violence on 3 and 4 October last year cost the lives

of eight colleagues trying to report on the political troubles. Another eight journalists died in the **Bosnia and Herzegovina** conflict, in which representatives of the media are regularly the targets of the various warring factions. In **Turkey**, the pro-Kurdish newspaper Ozgür Gündem has seen seven of its journalists killed since it was founded on 31 May 1992.

12. Journalists have also paid the highest price, their lives, in quest of information, in **Angola** (3), **Azerbaijan** (1), **Colombia** (4), **Congo** (1), **Georgia** (3), **Guatemala** (1), **India** (2), **Italy** (1), **Lithuania** (1), **Mexico** (1), **Peru** (1), **Philippines** (1), **Rwanda** (1), **Somalia** (4), **South Africa** (1), **Tajikistan** (3), **Turkey** (4), **United Kingdom** (1) and **Venezuela** (1).

13. Impartial public investigations by the competent authorities into these murders are rare; this is particularly the case in **Colombia**, **Peru**, **Turkey**, and **Tajikistan**.

Notes

1/ This list is available for consultation in the Secretariat.

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